

Colgoun m.

Bakers Hill

1<sup>st</sup> January 1936

My dear Massey.

When conversing with you lately you appear to think that Smudge experience of mine in this State tended to be historic & would be of interest to the Historical Society.

The present year completes my 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Western Australia - Colony & State. Within a week of landing I obtained work in the Public works department as an assistant Engineer and except for a period of four years when I was City Engineer of Perth continued in the service for 40 years pursuing a life of constructive work largely finishing.

The first work on which I was engaged was the Blackline-Newcastle (Gdgar) railway I am informed up here that the white gum sleepers laid during the construction of that line are still there.

The second was the survey of the Swan at Fremantle for Sir John Gode. That survey was used later by Mr. C. J. O'Connor in his harbour scheme.

The specific topic in our conversation above

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referred to was the "Madura Pass". Several times  
lately. I have seen allusion to this pass in the Press  
& quite lately a picture, but the origin seems  
unknown briefly I was the author of the Road  
up it - in conjunction with Mr. James Gill.

The late Mr. John Hume had completed  
his flying survey of the overland railway and  
the Government of the day decided to follow up  
by investigations for Wales.

I am entirely dependant on memory for  
my statements & as any papers which exist  
in the P.N.O. are ungettable somewhat true  
it would be very laborious to wade through  
them. My diaries were purely official may be  
there also so in minor details I may not be  
quite accurate.

It was decided that the Encla division  
should be the area to be explored first. The  
inland cliffs being the base. These cliffs at  
Twilight Cove, strike inland previously they  
rise from the sea up to 400 feet high and  
return again to the sea 7 miles beyond  
Encla describing an irregular arc of over  
200 miles the greatest distance from the sea  
being 30 miles.

At this point abt 10 miles from Twilight

about 130 from Eucla an attempt had been made by a pastoral Company to establish a station, which its promoters named "Madura". A small house (intact) & sundry other cottages in more or less repair existed also underground water tanks & one or two small limestone dams made in the cliff gullies. The storage of this water was largely responsible for my choice of a base camp, also fine traversable country to the sea & unlimited fuel which was necessary for our boring operation.

Mr. Muir had suggested Twilight Cove as a base as water existed there but any overland travelling before attempting the passage of the cliffs was on sand, too heavy for Camel haulage & there was no timber for 17 miles there too rendered Twilight Cove ineligible.

The Problem up the Cliffs in any case was a problem one which exercised my mind while the deep bore at Madura was in progress.

I reached Twilight Cove in 1902 in a small schooner the Grace Darling with a small party there being met by Mr. John Graham who had contracted to supply Camels for our work. He brought advice for me from Eyre Patch giving me an absolutely free hand in choice of base and general operations & offer

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... decided  
some enaimation, to make my base at Maduea  
an ideal camp.

I must explain that the Cliffs 17 miles from  
Twilight Cove gr. heavily timbered with Giant  
Mallo so dense sometimes as to obscure  
other feature in the Cliffs. This occurred  
in the case of what. Afterward named the  
Pass which was unknown to any white man.  
The Grahamer who had been practically  
all these lives in the neighbourhood did  
not know of its existence & this is how it was  
discovered.

The Engineers in Chief of the respective State  
Came over to this state to confer with Mr. C. J. Palmer  
regarding the overland line they touched at  
Bucla & was instructed to meet them there.  
En route was overtaken at a place called  
Mundrabilla by a phenomenal rainfall 7" in  
48 hours 10" is the average annual rainfall  
for the district. The Camel could not travel  
sinking belly deep when urged to go so  
so had to take refuge among the debris  
under the Cliffs until the flood water were  
absorbed. I was soaked two night & days  
I managed to reach Bucla but too late to  
meet the Engineers in Chief on arrival.

(8)  
In time however to confer with them before departure.  
On return to Madura found matters progressing well the bore having got down to a considerable depth but the storm had delayed operations for a day or two.

The Works Manager Mr. James Gill with whom I had frequently discussed methods of getting the heavy machinery up the Cliffs told me that about two miles to the east of the camp where there existed a dry

watercourse a tremendous body of water had come down carrying masses of debris before it rendering passage impossible. I had to cross this watercourse on return but the flow had ceased. This made us both think hard as it seemed to indicate a flow off a big Catchment above the cliffs & an invisible flow down so we investigated in consequence the creek disappeared into the mallee but was easily but ~~easily~~ followed up to pass in the Cliffs full of timber on both sides. It soon became patent that we had made an important find the creek continued for five miles onto large limestone outcrop hence the rapid catchment -



(6)  
On running level up from the Lowland to the upland plain it was patent a road was feasible so during a lull in boring operations while waiting for extra casing I employed the party in making a road up this what has since been known as the "Madura pass".

Some years later the road was wrecked by lightning. but could easily be renewed so far as I can gather this is the only practicable passage up the whole line of cliffs & but for it the job of taking heavy plant up to the higher country would have been a serious problem.

I could write till further order as to the why & wherefore. but the above are salient points. The landing of the heavy machinery at Jamhuri in the coast from the Schooner two miles out at sea on to an improvised raft towing this to the beach & etc, etc, are other stories. The above sketch is only intended to describe how the Madura Pass came into being. Incidentally at about 2000 feet we struck a flow of water in the Madura of 70,000 gallons which is running to this day & being utilised by a Pastoral

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Company:

I think you stated to me that the  
Secretary of the Historical Society would  
welcome such data as this, & sketch as it  
is; Should he desire any more on other  
objects which I can supply I am very  
much at his service.

Sincerely Yours.

Ernest L. Casselle.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY